

## A LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS OF SHOP SIGNS

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## ABSTRACT

It is surprising to find that there have been many shops in Banda Aceh that use English on their signs. This study was conducted to investigate the shop owners' reasons for using English on their shop signs. To obtain the data from the shop owners, observation sheet and interview guide were used as the research instruments. The data were analyzed by using analytic induction by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014). It was found that the 10 shop owners gave four reasons they used English in their shop signs, which can be classified into the themes. They are 1) to be easily remembered; 2) to follow the trend; 3) to use their own name; and 4) to be unique. In conclusion, among four terms of reasons of shop owners in using English in their shop signs, the theme of "becoming unique" or distinctive is the most given reason by the shop owners.

**Keywords:** *linguistic landscape, shop sign, language choice, language attitude.*

## INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the advancement of communication and technology makes people able to communicate to each other easily either by doing voice call or even sending messages and get to know the information they need fast. Much information that one needs to know can be easily obtained from many websites on internet or can be read through many kinds of social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Line, Telegram, Youtube, and so on. The information people read and gain is written in the form of text or even broadcasted orally with any form of languages around the world. The languages are used when people communicate to each other. One of them is English language.

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While doing communication, people use their own language in running the day in their life. It is truly undeniable that people cannot be separated from language. Gorter (2006, p. 1) stated that we are all surrounded by a language, which is in textual form, as it is displayed in such many ways, namely on shop windows, commercial signs, posters, official notices, traffic signs, etc. Among many language expressions, the language that has been around us is English and it has been used by people around the world to communicate spokenly to each other. And, it is also used to deliver or give meaning in the form of textual as it has been appearing in many shop signs all over the world. Gorter (2006) said that language appears in textual form in commercial signs. Shop signs can be grouped into commercial signs because they deliver the meaning to people looking at it even though it is written in the form of text.

The existence of shop signs in English has drawn so much attention towards their appearance that contributes to giving a more colorful sign along the road. Shop signs in English have widely spread around the world. They have turned to be a trend; they are proved by Zughoul (2007) who stated that the use of English signs in the street was phenomenal. The appearance of shop signs in English gives a new spirit for the new shop owners to use English in their shop signs. Shop signs in English can change the shop to be more interesting because the English phrases on the board can be easily read and attractive.

Banda Aceh is one of the cities located in Aceh Province, one of the provinces in Indonesia, and is the capital of the province. It is a small city where its population is around 254,904 in 2016 according to Central Bureau of Statistic of Banda Aceh. As the capital of Aceh Province, it indeed is the central for both government and business activities. For business sector, there are of course many shops standing in Banda Aceh where the shop signs come in diversity of languages.

There are many shops in Banda Aceh where their shop signs are written in English. Some of the owners of phone shops, electronic shops, coffee shops, baby shops, clothes shops and computer shops tend to use English in their shop signs. They seem to be motivated to use English for their shop signs in this modern era. On the other hand, English as shop signs can hardly be seen in grocery stores. Most of grocery stores in Banda Aceh are written in Indonesian language.

Based on the researcher's observation, there has been scarce of this kind of research conducted comprehensively on the linguistic landscape study of shop signs in Banda Aceh. Therefore, the authors intend to investigate further to fill the gap. The researcher formulates the

research question as “What are the reasons of shop owners in Banda Aceh to use English in their shop signs?”

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Linguistic Landscape**

Linguistic landscape is the language that appears such as in road signs, shop signs, and advertising billboards to unite the linguistic landscape in a territory. Landry and Bourhis (1997, p.25) defined linguistic landscape as the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration. In addition, Ben-Rafael, Shohamy, Amara, and Trumper-Hecht (2006, p. 14) explained linguistic landscape as any kinds of sign or announcement located in both outside or inside a public institution and a private business in a given geographical location. Furthermore, Blommaert (2013) defined linguistic landscape as a small piece of written language. Moreover, Moriarty (2014, p. 457) more broadly referred to linguistic landscape as a site where language, along with other semiotic resources, is involved in the symbolic construction of multilingual spaces.

### **Kinds of Linguistic Landscape**

Some of kinds of linguistic landscape mentioned by Landry and Bourhis (1997) above are elaborated in more detail below.

### **Public Signs**

Qiannan (2012, p. 168) mentioned that public signs are the text language for people in public places. There are several same expressions, including sign language, logo, sign, slogan, and so on. In addition, He (2019, p. 286) stated that public signs, which means written language to be seen publicly in public places, are the most common practical language in human's life. They are special writing styles that are open to and facing the public to achieve certain communicative goals.

Furthermore, Ding (2006) as cited in Ko (2010, p. 112), said that public sign refers to the type of language that shows what the public need to know in public places, including signs, directions, road signs, slogans, public notices and warnings. Moreover, Luo and Li (2006) as cited in Ko (2010, p. 112), mentioned that the type of language displayed in public places is called public sign. It serves special communication functions

and provides information and instructions. That kind of language includes road signs, advertisements, product brochures, tourism guides, propaganda materials and public notices.

### **Commercial Shop Signs**

Shop sign is one of the public signs which is written in many languages. Regarding language written in shop sign, it depends on what countries the shop sign is located. The language in shop sign may come in diverse and it can be monolingual, bilingual, or even multilingual. In addition, shop sign can be seen by people when they are passing around the street of central business. It appears in front of the shop as the identity of the shop to make it becomes more attractive. The more attractive the shop sign, the more it works to attract customers. Oktaviani (2019, p. 10) stated that shop names include to the commercial signs which have a function to attract potential customers.

The main purpose of signs is to communicate, to convey information designed to assist the receiver with decision-making based on the information provided. Sebeok (2001, p. 1) stated that signs, in human life, serve many functions, namely: they allow people to recognize patterns in things; they act as predictive guides or plans for taking actions; they serve as exemplars of specific kinds of phenomena.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Method**

This is a descriptive qualitative study. Descriptive qualitative research strives to describe occurring phenomena naturally without any manipulation. Seliger and Shohamy (1989, p. 124) stated that descriptive research involves a collection of techniques used to specify, delineate, or describe naturally occurring phenomena without experimental manipulation.

In conducting this research, the researcher conducted some scientific procedures based on the suggestion and recommendation of the previous studies. Generally, the researcher observed the shop signs with English name located in the main roads in Banda Aceh with the guide of observation sheet. The observation sheet was provided by the researcher by adapting some questions from Nash (2011). After obtaining the list of shops with English names, the researcher interviewed the owner of the shops with the help of interview guide, where the questions were adapted from Nash (2011) and Nofal and Mansour (2014).

## **Research Instrument**

### **Observation Sheet**

One of the research instruments used by the researcher was field observation. This observation provided the researcher a chance to obtain the data immediately. To obtain the data from observation, the researcher used observation sheet. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007, p. 396) stated that the particular feature of observation as a research process is that an opportunity is offered to an investigator to gather live data from naturally occurring social situations.

Hopkins (1993, p. 100) stated that there are two kinds of observation: structured observation and unstructured observation. In structured observation the observer, in advance, conducts some preparation, such as schedule, list of subjects' behaviors to be investigated. On the other hand, the unstructured observation is the observation that involves the activities, such as writing down and recording what have been determined in the objectives of the present research without looking at a certain list.

### **Interview Guide**

The interview was conducted by the researcher to obtain the primary data in this research. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007, p. 349) stated interview offers participants possibility to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live and grow and to express how they view situations from their own point of view. Therefore, it can be clearly understood that the aims of interview are to know about the perspective of the interviewee about the topic and to know the reasons of that perspective. The observation sheet was adapted from Nash (2011).

## **Techniques of Data Collection**

### **Observation**

In obtaining the data, the researcher firstly did observation towards the shops with English name located in the main roads in Banda Aceh. The shops with English name were listed based on the guide of observation sheet. Together with observation, the researcher took the photos of the shop signs with English name to support and strengthen the data from observation.

## **Interview**

After getting the list of the shops with English name located in the main roads in Banda Aceh, the researcher asked the willingness of the shop owners whether or not the researcher could conduct the research in their shops. Afterwards, the shop owners were consented to agree and allow the researcher to conduct the research in their shops. Then, the researcher interviewed the owners of the shops to obtain the primary data. The interview with the shops owners asked some questions about categories of framework (Nash, 2011; Nofal & Mansour, 2014).

## **Techniques of Data Analysis**

The data were analysed through three stages of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), namely: data condensation, data display, and verification and conclusion.

First, observational notes and interviewing transcripts were transcribed before. The researcher then input all of them into a group of folders with their names. The first stage started from labelling free coding and they eventually became categorical coding via recursive analytical processes. After having been condensed, the categorical data were displayed to expose the interrelationship amongst them. In verification, their representativeness was checked and examined whether they were appropriate to be classified as themes.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **Results**

#### ***The Display of English Shop Signs in Banda Aceh***

In the result from observation, the researcher observed all shops with English name in the main roads in Banda Aceh on Monday, January, 6<sup>th</sup> 2020. Those roads are Jl. Mohd. Jam, Jl. KH. Ahmad Dahlan, Jl. Diponegoro, Jl. Panglima Polem, and Jl. Pocut Baren. While doing observation, the researcher found that there are 97 shops with English names in the main roads in Banda Aceh.

Each road has different numbers of shops with English name. There are 13 shops with English name at Jl. Mohd. Jam, 16 shops with English name at Jl. KH. Ahmad Dahlan, 15 shops with English name at Jl. Diponegoro, 30 shops with English name at Jl. Panglima Polem, and 23 shops with English name at Jl. Pocut Baren. The shops with English name in each road that have been observed in this research can be categorized into five categories such as single English word, the

combination of place name and English word, the combination of person's name and English word, the combination of abbreviation and English word, and the combination of English phrases.

Among all 97 shops with English name located in those main roads in Banda Aceh, the researcher took merely 10 shops with English name because all the 10 owners of the shops consented the researcher to conduct the research in their shops and displayed their names in the study. The 10 shops with English name as the data in this research and their locations are portrayed in the following table.

**Table 1.** The 10 Shops as The Observation Data

No	Shop's Name	Feature	Address
1.	<b>FCOMPUTER</b>	<b>Computer</b>	Jl. Pocut Baren No. 88D, Kp. Keuramat, Banda Aceh
2.	<b>SpeedCom</b>	<b>Computer</b>	Jl. Pocut Baren No. 90C, Kp. Keuramat, Banda Aceh
3.	<b>MASTER PRINTER</b>	<b>Computer</b>	Jl. Pocut Baren No. 43C, Kp. Keuramat, Banda Aceh
4.	<b>GRAND Computer</b>	<b>Computer</b>	Jl. Pocut Baren No 84C, Kp. Keuramat, Banda Aceh
5.	<b>REFILL CENTER</b>	<b>Computer</b>	Jl. Pocut Baren No. 88B, Kp. Keuramat, Banda Aceh
6.	<b>My Computer</b>	<b>Computer</b>	Jl. Pocut Baren No. 96D, Kp. Keuramat, Banda Aceh
7.	<b>City Electronic</b>	<b>Electronic</b>	Jl. Mohd. Jam No. 63, Kampung Baru, Banda Aceh
8.	<b>LUCKY</b>	<b>Fashion</b>	Jl. KH. Ahmad Dahlan No. 3, Merduati, Banda Aceh
9.	<b>EXPERT</b>	<b>Shoes</b>	Jl. Diponegoro No. 178, Dusun Melati, Merduati, Banda Aceh
10.	<b>Smile Cell</b>	<b>Gadget</b>	Jl. Panglima Polem No. 61, Peunayong, Banda Aceh

The table above presented that the 10 shops with English name as the data in this research. The 10 shop owners allowed the researcher to collect the data from themselves. Therefore, the researcher conducted the research there.

### ***Shop Owners' Reasons for Using English in Their Shop Signs***

In doing interview with the shop owners, the researcher asked 5 questions to each of them. As a result, there were 5 questions that needed to be answered by the shop owners, there was only 1 question that served in this chapter as the focus of this research towards the shop owners was to find out the shop owner's reasons in using English in their shop's signs. The response of the question in this article was the 3rd question among 5 questions provided by the researcher to each of the shop owners.

There are four reasons of shop owners to use English in their shop signs found in this research, namely: to be easily remembered, to follow the trend, to use their own name, and to be unique. The following is the presentation of the data found in this study.

#### *To Be Easily Remembered*

One of the reasons why shop owners in Banda Aceh use English in their shop signs is they want their shop names to be easily remembered by many people. Some shop owners in Banda Aceh want their shop names to be easily remembered by many people. Here are some responses by the shop owners:

- (R<sub>1</sub>): "My motivation of using English name in my shop's name is because both I merely sell all brands of printer and I want my shop's name to be easily remembered by many people." (SO<sub>3</sub>)
- (R<sub>2</sub>): "My motivation of using English name in my shop's name is because I want my shop's name be more familiar and be easily remembered. Thus, when people visit my shop, they will continuously remember my shop's name." (SO<sub>7</sub>)
- (R<sub>3</sub>): "My motivation of using English name in my shop's name is because in order my shop's name will be widely known and be easily remembered by the society and tourists especially tourists from Malaysia who come to Aceh particularly to Pasar Aceh." (SO<sub>9</sub>)



The responses above shows that SO<sub>3</sub>, SO<sub>7</sub> and SO<sub>9</sub> decided to use English in their shop signs because they want their shop's name to be easily remembered by many people.

#### *To Follow The Trend*

Another reason that the shop owners in Banda Aceh use English in their shop signs is they want to follow the trend. Trend keeps changing and it is always dynamic as supported by Oktaviani (2019, p. 47) who stated that trend is dynamic and always changes. As trend moves forward together with the change of life, shop owners in Banda Aceh have intention to give the names in their shops as how the life looks like in the recent life. Here are some responses by the shop owners:

(R<sub>1</sub>): "My motivation of using English name in my shop's name is because "Computer" is the technology of the world. Thus, I have initiative to give my shop's name with English name as "FCOMPUTER" in order all people know that when they come to my shop, they know that I sell all kinds of new computer and provide the service to fix the computer in "FCOMPUTER". (SO<sub>1</sub>)

(R<sub>2</sub>): "There is no certain motivation for me to use English in my shop's name. The only thing is I just want to run a business with the name of "Grand". I use "Grand Computer" as my shop name because I have aspiration to run a business with the name of Grand. Thus, my aspiration to establish this shop with a hope that this shop will be "Grand and Excellent". (SO<sub>4</sub>)

The responses above show that SO<sub>1</sub> and SO<sub>4</sub> decided to use English in their shop signs because they want to follow the trends.

#### *To Use Their Own Name*

Using their own name means bringing a wish together with the name of the owner of the shops. It is portrayed by Oktaviani (2019, p. 48) that some people believe that good names definitely have good meaning or wish. With a hope that good names possess good *do'a*, the shop owner in Banda Aceh uses their own name in running his/her business. Here is the response by the shop owner:

(R<sub>1</sub>): “My motivation of using English name in my shop’s name is because the English word “My” has the same pronunciation with my mother’s nickname “Mai”. But, I know that the English word “My” means “Punya Saya”. Then, I thought it is suitable to combine the word “My” with the word “Computer”. The result is “My Computer” and the meaning is “Komputer Saya”. Thus, my shop’s name has relation with my mother’s nickname.” (SO<sub>6</sub>)

The response above shows that SO<sub>6</sub> decided to use English in his shop sign because of the background of his mother’s name is “Mai”. He tries to connect the pronunciation of his mother’s “Mai” with the English word “My”.

### *To Be Unique*

Being unique is trying to do or to act differently with others who have regularly do things before. Being unique is also an effort done by some people to be distinctive from others. The effort is to show the new thing that is different compared with other common existing things. Trying to appear differently with others with a perspective of other people is going to attract attention to those different things; the shop owners in Banda Aceh gave the reason to be unique to their shop signs. Here are some responses by the shop owners:

(R<sub>1</sub>): “My motivation of using English name in my shop’s name is because I want my shop’s name looks cool.” (SO<sub>2</sub>)

(R<sub>2</sub>): “My motivation of using English name in my shop’s name is because I want my shop’s name looks cool.” (SO<sub>5</sub>)

(R<sub>3</sub>): “My motivation of using English name in my shop’s name is because it is more cooler, more up-to-date, and is easy to be remembered.” (SO<sub>8</sub>)

(R<sub>4</sub>): “My motivation of using English name in my shop’s name is to appear differently with other shops.” (SO<sub>10</sub>)

The responses above shows that SO<sub>2</sub>, SO<sub>5</sub>, SO<sub>8</sub> and SO<sub>10</sub> decided to use English in their shop signs because they want their shop's names to be anti-mainstream.

## **Discussions**

### ***Shop Owners' Reasons for Using English in Their Shop Signs***

Based on the result of the interview with the shop owners, it was found that the 10 shop owners in Banda Aceh has four reasons in giving their shop names in English. The reasons of the shop owners to use English in their shop signs are to be easily remembered, to follow the trend, to use their own name, and to be unique.

From 10 interview data from shop owners, the researcher found that the most dominant reasons given by shop owners in this study are to be unique. Out of 10 shop owners who gave the reason why they used English in their shop signs, four of them gave the reason "to be unique", three of them gave the reason "to be easily remembered", two of them gave the reason "to follow the trend", and one of them gave the reason "to use their own name".

This finding was also reported by Oktaviani (2019). In her research, she found that most of shop owners in Gresik Kota Baru (GKB), Gresik, East Java, gave some reasons why they use English in their shop signs. There are four kinds of reasons given by shop owners in Gresik Kota Baru (GKB), Gresik, East Java, that she found namely to be easily remembered, to follow the trend, to use their own name, and to be unique.

Based on the result of interview with the shop owners in this study, the researcher found that there are three shop owners who gave the term "to be easily remembered" as the reason they intend to use English name in their shop signs. In line with this finding, Oktaviani (2019) also found in her research that there is one shop owner of PETSHOP KU who said "to be easily remembered" as the reason why he used English name in his shop sign.

Another reason found by the researcher in this study that there are two shop owners who gave the term "to follow the trend" as the reason they intend to use English in their shop signs. In line with this finding, Oktaviani (2019) also found in her research that there is one shop owner of ZURA FASHION who said "to follow the trend" as the reason why she used English name in her shop sign.

The term “to use their own name” was also found by the researcher based on the result of interview of the shop owners in this study. It is found that there is only one shop owner who gave the “to use their own name” as the reason he intends to use English in his shop signs. In line with this finding, Oktaviani (2019) also found in her research that there is one shop owner of DINDA SNACK who said “to use their own name” as the reason she used English in her shop sign. In addition, it is also in line with the result of research finding by Hussein, Nofal, and Mansour (2015, p. 160). In their study, it is found that there is tendency of shop owners who claimed no relation between business names and products may have ascribed their business names to their family names or even names of certain places.

The last reason found by the researcher in this study is the term “to be unique”. There are four shop owners who gave that term as the reason they intend to use English in their shop signs. In line with this finding, Oktaviani (2019) also found in her study that there is one shop owner of EDI SPEED SHOP who said “to be unique” as the reason why he used English in his shop sign.

In addition, this finding is contrary to Hussein, Nofal, and Mansour (2015). They found in their study that using foreign names in shop signs was profoundly enhanced by prestige. After doing interview with 10 shop owners in Banda Aceh who use English in their shop signs, the researcher did not find that none of the 10 shop owners who intended to use English in their shop signs because they want to enhance their prestige.

Furthermore, Akindele (2011) had conducted a study and revealed that in an interview with some shop owners, it was asserted repeatedly that the use of English language in signs was functional to attract customers and the naming of the shops in Chinese, Setswana and to some extent English was for economic purposes to attract potential customers. The researcher could not also find in his research that the 10 shop owners in Banda Aceh has the reason “to attract customers” in giving English in their shop signs.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

After finishing this study, the researcher portrays some conclusions and suggestions in term of the reasons of the shop owners in using English in their shop’s signs. As told in the first chapter, the purpose of this study is to find out the reasons of the shop owners in using English in their shop signs.

Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded that there were three shop owners who decided to use English in their shop signs because they want their shop's names to be easily remembered by many people, two shop owners who decided to use English in their shop signs because they want to follow the trends, one shop owner who decided to use English because he wants to use his own name, and four shop owners who decided to use English in their shop signs because they want their shop's names to be anti-mainstream.

The researcher hopes that the result of this study could be one of references for other researchers who are interested in conduct further studies on this topic in order to find out the influences of a language to shape its language attitude and linguistic landscape. There are admittedly many reasons of other shop owners in using English name in their shop's names. It is also hoped that other researchers can conduct deeper study towards reasons of other shop owners in using English name in their shop's name, especially those shop owners who run their business in non-English speaking countries.

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